

was attacked by enemy troops. Charette worked quickly to treat his fellow soldiers as best he could. While treating one soldier, a grenade landed near them, and Charette threw himself on top of the other soldier in an effort to absorb the blast. Although the blast destroyed Charette's medical kit he continued to treat soldiers by tearing off pieces of his uniform to help treat wounds. At one point, a soldier was so badly wounded that he was unable to move on his own accord. Charette stood up in the trench and lifted the man and carried him through enemy fire to safety. For his actions, William Charette was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Dwight D. Eisenhower on January 12, 1954.

William Charette stands as a shining example of bravery and determination that all Americans strive toward. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Master Chief Hospital Corpsman William Charette for his service to the United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THE LATE
ASSEMBLYMAN VINCENT J.
GRABER, SR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the passing of a legislator, colleague and friend, the Honorable Vincent J. Graber, Sr., who passed away on July 2, 2014.

Vince Graber was a public servant of the highest caliber and during his career was among the most effective lawmakers in the nation. Following his service on the West Seneca Town Board, Vince was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1974, displacing a Republican incumbent who, after election to the state senate, would go on to be a close friend, colleague and ally within the powerful Western New York legislative delegation. In time, Vince rose to chair the Assembly's Transportation Committee; this is where he made his most significant mark.

Vince led the way in New York and in the nation in authoring legislation designed to make it safer to be a passenger in a motor vehicle in the state of New York. From landmark legislation mandating the use of safety seats for children to authorship of the first-in-the-nation mandatory seat belt law, to legislation combating and reducing incidences of DWI, Vince Graber was a leader in transportation policymaking in the United States for better than a generation. It is not hyperbole to suggest that a great many Americans—thousands, to be sure—are alive today because of Vince's good work.

Vince eventually rose to leadership in the State Assembly, ending his career as Speaker Pro Tempore, where he presided over the daily sessions of the Assembly. In so doing, Vince encouraged and facilitated an orderly and urbane atmosphere within the Assembly chamber, a sometimes difficult task in a legislative body known for occasionally raucous debate.

I never served in the State Assembly with Vince, as his service predated my own service

in that legislative body by a few years. But I came to know Vince well, first as a local elected official, and later as Vince would visit my office as a government relations official following his years of public service. Vince Graber was always knowledgeable and always prepared, and gave those to whom he was responsible—his family, his constituents and, later, his clients—the very best he had to offer.

The son of the late Howard and Eileen Graber, Vince was a United States Army veteran of the Korean Conflict and was the recipient of countless honors and awards throughout his long career. Vince leaves behind a large and loving extended family, including his wife Patricia, their ten children and their own families.

Mr. Speaker, our community, our state and, yes, this nation owes a great debt of gratitude to Vince Graber. His skill and his vision made New York a safer place for motorists, passengers and pedestrians. I was honored to call Vince Graber my friend, and I am similarly honored to remember and commemorate his many contributions here today.

TRIBUTE TO PETE GIANOPULOS

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2014

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a teacher, soldier, public servant, and community leader who for 90 years has lived and breathed the city of Taft, California. Born and raised in Taft, Pete Gianopulos has become well-known throughout the city as a passionate American and an active member of his community.

When the foundation of American resolve was tested by the Second World War, Pete answered the call of duty and served honorably with occupational forces near Hiro, Kure, and Hiroshima, Japan as part of the 41st Infantry Division in the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. When he returned from the war, Pete completed undergraduate and graduate studies at Taft College and Fresno State College before continuing his graduate work at UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Cal State Bakersfield, and Fresno State. Upon returning to Taft, Pete began teaching at Lincoln Junior High School, and continued his educational career for 35 years as an Industrial Arts teacher, a counselor, and the Director of Guidance for the Taft Union High School District. Though he retired from teaching in 1986 after 36 years, his service to the education community only represents a portion of his public service.

Pete has served in multiple positions at local levels of government, including the Oildorado Committee, the Kern County Water District, the Kern View Community Mental Health Center Committee, the State of California Resource Agency, and the Department of Water Resources. Notably, he served on the Taft City Council in 1961, where only one year later, Pete Gianopulos became Taft's mayor, and served as such through 1966.

Today, Pete continues to serve as an active member of the community. As the founder,

host and producer of "Taft Heritage," a local television program supported by the West Kern Oil Museum and Taft High School, and an active writer for his column in the local paper titled "Remember When," Pete champions the message that there is always something to learn from the rich history of the city of Taft.

Pete's dedication and service to Taft has not gone unnoticed and next month, the Taft City Council will proclaim August 23, 2014 as "Pete Gianopulos Day." On that day, it is my hope that all the residents of Taft look to this man's history as a source of inspiration for what it means to be a citizen of the people. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Pete Gianopulos a very happy 90th birthday, and thank him for his many years of dedicated service to the city of Taft.

HONORING KYLE MATTHEW OTA,
EAGLE SCOUT, BOY SCOUT
TROOP 611, SAN JOSE BUDDHIST
CHURCH BETSUIN

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2014

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Kyle Matthew Ota, a member of Boy Scout Troop 611 at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and one of my constituents, on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in April of 2014.

Kyle, the son of Pat and Dorothy Ota, began his scouting career as a member of Cub Scout Pack 611 at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, where he earned the Metta and Sangha awards, as well as the Arrow of Light. Rising through the ranks, Kyle served as patrol leader, troop quartermaster, dharma scribe, troop scribe, senior patrol leader, and den chief.

Kyle's Eagle Scout project reflects his longstanding commitment to the people of San Jose, and the residents of Japantown in particular. Yu-Ai Kai, a stellar community-based organization that promotes healthy aging, independent living, and high quality of life, provides multi-lingual community services, social interaction, and a sense of belonging to our elderly citizens. Seniors and their families frequently pass in front of Yu-Ai Kai's Akiyama Senior Wellness Center on Jackson Street while traversing beautiful Japantown, so Kyle constructed an outdoor bulletin board in front of the building. This board displays flyers, schedules, and other information that allows seniors to better understand and utilize the Akiyama's many life-improving offerings.

Kyle was a scholar-athlete at St. Francis High School in Mountain View, where he participated in varsity track and intramurals, earned entry into the honor roll and National Honor Society, and was awarded tuition assistance by the California Scholarship Federation. Kyle now attends San Diego State University, where the dedication to community service instilled in him by scouting continues to make his parents—and all of us in California's 19th District—very proud.